CULTURAL CONTEXT AND DATA QUALITY

The purpose of this section is to assess the quality of the data noted in Appendices I - III and to provide a brief discussion of the cultural context of the sites noted in the inventories. Specifically, the discussion of the cultural context will seek to relate the specific sites in the inventories to the general trends noted in the earlier discussion of the region's prehistory and history.

PREHISTORIC SITES

Table 5 provides a summary of the known prehistoric sites found within the project area. In general, the known sites primarily date to the Woodland I and Woodland II periods and post-date 5000 B.P. However, before considering the cultural context of these sites, it is necessary to consider the quality of the data base of known prehistoric sites.

The state site files, from which the inventory in Appendix I and Table 5 were generated, record only the sites located in places where people have looked for archaeological sites. Although two large research-oriented projects generated some of the data found in the site files (Figure 19), for the most part these files provide a very biased sample of the possible site locations within the project area. The presence or absence of certain types of sites from varied time periods, and the relative abundance of sites of any function of age, cannot be used for anything other than an initial approximation of the total range of prehistoric cultural resources that may be found in the area. Nevertheless, the data from these site files can be used to

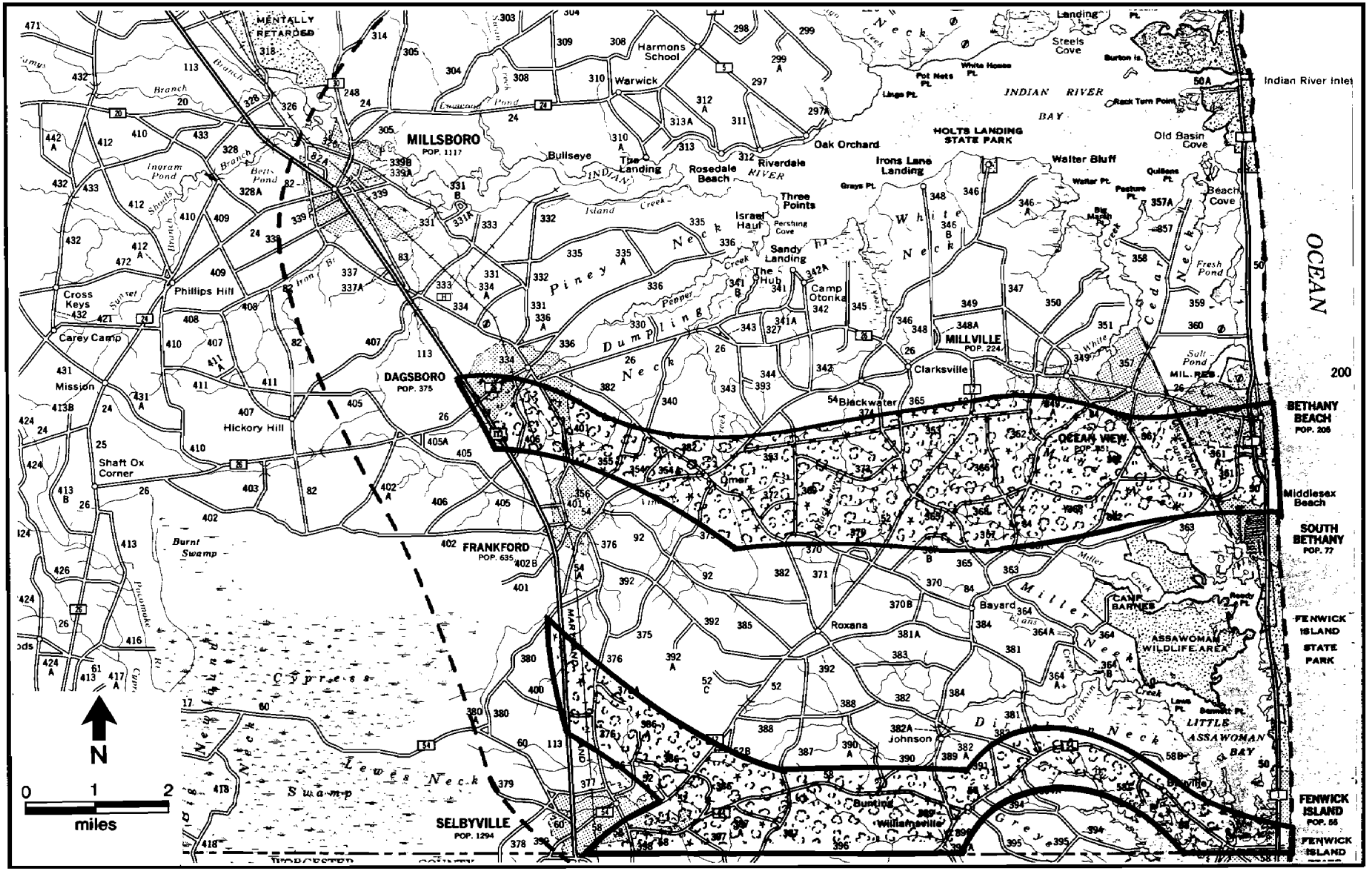
TABLE 5

SUMMARY OF KNOWN PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Site	Time Period	Function
7S-J-16	Woodland I	Unknown
7S-K-73	Woodland I	Procurement/ Processing
7S-K-71	----------	Procurement/ Processing
7S-K-72	Woodland I and Woodland II	Procurement/ Processing
7S-K-20	----------	----------
7S-K-18	Woodland I	----------
7S-K-17	Woodland I	----------
7S-K-11	Woodland I and Woodland II	----------
7S-K-10	----------	----------
7S-K-59	Woodland I	Procurement/ Processing
7S-K-7	----------	----------

develop initial impressions, and testable hypotheses about prehistoric site locations (for example, see Custer, Cavallo, and Stewart 1983; Custer and Wallace 1982). Because the study corridors here are small, the potential for biases in the site data is even greater. With these limitations of the data in mind, the cultural context of the known sites can be evaluated and patterns of site locations can be tentatively noted.

FIGURE 19
Previous Archaeological Investigations in Southeastern Sussex



No sites dating to the Paleo-Indian Period are noted in the site files for the study area and this finding is an indication that population densities in the study area were probably low. Paleo-Indian settlement pattern models from the Middle Atlantic Coastal Plain (Custer, Cavallo, and Stewart 1983) and summaries of fluted point data from the Delmarva Peninsula (Custer 1983a: Chapter 3; 1984b) note that there are two concentrations of fluted point finds in Delaware. One is in the northern part of the state between Newark, Delaware, and Elkton, Maryland, and is associated with outcrops of high quality cryptocrystalline lithic materials (Custer and Galasso 1980; Custer, Ward, and Watson 1986). Another site concentration is located along the poorly drained mid-peninsular drainage divide where there are good data indicating the presence of numerous game-attractive swamps and bogs during later Pleistocene and Early Holocene times. The study area crosses a small portion of this Mid-Peninsular Drainage Divide and some interior swamps and bogs are present. Because Paleo-Indian sites are associated with areas that were once poorly-drained woodlands, such sites are probably present in the study area, even though they have not yet been recorded. No known Archaic sites are present in the study; however as was the case for Paleo-Indian sites, there are probably more Archaic sites in the study area.

Sites of the Woodland I Period represent the greatest portion of the recorded prehistoric sites in the proposed highway corridor. Of the 11 known sites, 7 had identifiable Woodland I components. All of these sites are recorded as

procurement/processing sites. However, because only limited fieldwork has been done at these sites, they may indeed be larger base camps. Two Woodland II sites are recorded for the study area and both have associated earlier Woodland I occupations. Continuity of site locations between these two time periods has been viewed as indicative of continuities in adaptations between the Woodland I and II periods in southern Delaware (Custer and Griffith 1986). No Contact Period sites were noted for the study area in the state site files.

HISTORIC SITES

The historic standing structures identified in the project corridor are listed in Appendix II and summarized in Table 6. As can be seen, about 88% (153 structures) of inventoried standing structures within the project corridor date from the last historic period (1880 to 1940+), and the majority of these structures seem to be post-1940 construction. The other three chronological periods are not represented, with no structures dating from either the 1630 to 1730 period, the 1730 to 1770 period, or the 1770 to 1830 period. The project corridor seems to accurately reflect the housing situation in Sussex County overall, for Ames et al. (1989:58) have estimated that about 77% of the housing stock in the county has been constructed since 1940.

Site functional types are fairly well-represented throughout the corridor, considering that Sussex County has been and remains a predominately agricultural region (Table 7). The vast majority of sites are either agricultural complexes, dwelling complexes or

TABLE 6

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC STANDING STRUCTURES FROM THE BAHP FILES WITHIN THE CORRIDOR

	Date Range				
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
QUADS	**1630-1730+/-**	**1730-1770+/-**	**1770-1830+/-**	**1830-1880+/-**	**1880-1940+/-**
Millsboro	--	--	--	--	1
Frankford	--	--	--	7	49
Bethany Beach	--	--	--	5	14
Selbyville	--	--	--	7	68
Assawoman Bay	--	--	--	1	21
TOTAL	0	0	0	20	153

GRAND TOTAL 173

TABLE 7

SUMMARY OF SITE TYPES BY QUAD MAP WITHIN THE PROJECT CORRIDOR

	MILLSBORO	FRANKFORD	BETHANY BEACH	SELBYVILLE	ASSAWOMAN BAY	TOTAL
Agcx	--	18	7	24	11	60
Dwlcx	--	16	3	26	9	54
Dwlg	1	12	2	17	1	33
Mill	--	1	--	--	--	1
Church	--	1	--	1	--	2
Bridge	--	1	2	--	--	3
Shipwreck	--	--	1	--	--	1
TOTAL	1	49	15	68	21	154

Key:

Agcx - Agricultural Complex
Dwlcx - Dwelling Complex
Dwlg - Dwelling

dwellings (60, 54, and 33, respectively). Churches account for two sites. The remainder of the sites compiled from the BAHP files include three early twentieth century bridges, one mill, and one historic shipwreck.

There are a total of 233 potential historical archaeological sites located within the project corridor. Appendix III contains a complete inventory of these sites, Table 8 presents a summary of these sites by chronological period and Table 9 summarizes the sites by study corridor. It can be seen that by far the greatest number of sites (225) date from the 1830 to 1880 period of historic settlement; this is undoubtedly a bias in the historic source materials utilized for this study, since the only historic atlas showing the project area dates from this period, and there are few earlier published and detailed maps that can be used. Most of the identified sites were plotted from Beers' Atlas (1868), while the remaining sites were located from examinations of primary source documentation, in particular the manuscript Sussex County Road Papers dating prior to 1863. Site types represented by the potential historical archaeological sites are representative of the region as of the mid-nineteenth century, and consist of 215 agricultural complexes. One grist mill and one sawmill are present, one store, one wheelwright shop, eight schools, one church, two agricultural tenant house sites, 13 family cemeteries and two church cemeteries.

Taken together, the biases inherent in the historical archaeological sites information are partially corrected, because the standing structure files indicate that a substantial number of sites dating from the 1830 to 1880 period are still extant,

TABLE 8

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE BEACH ACCESS STUDY CORRIDORS

Site Type	Date Range: 1630 to 1730 ±	1730 to 1770 ±	1770 to 1830 ±	1830 to 1880 ±	1880 to 1940 ±	Unk.	Total
Ag. Cmplx.	--	4	1	210	--	--	215
Ag. Tenant	--	--	--	2	--	--	2
School	--	--	--	8	--	--	8
Church	--	--	--	1	--	--	1
Grist Mill	--	--	[1	same site 1	1]	--	1*
W.W. Shop	--	--	--	1	--	--	1
Fam. Cem.	--	--	--	--	--	13	13
Church Cem.	--	--	--	--	--	2	2
Store	--	--	--	1	--	--	1
Saw Mill	--	--	--	1	--	--	1
Total	0	4	1 1*	225	0 1*	15	245

Key.
Unk.= Unknown
Ag.= Agricultural
Cmplx.= Complex
W.W.= Wheelwright
Fam. Cem.= Family Cemetery

*This is one grist mill occupied during three time periods.

TABLE 9

SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES BY CORRIDOR

	Corridor 1	Corridor 2
Agcx	126	89
Ag. Tenant	2	--
School	4	4
Church	1	--
Store	1	--
Grist Mill	1	--
Wheelwright Shop	1	--
Sawmill	--	1
Fam. Cem.	6	7
Church Cem.	--	2
TOTAL	142	103

Key:

Corridor 1 - Delaware Route 26
Corridor 2 - Delaware Route 54
Agcx - agricultural complex
Ag. Tenant - agricultural tenant
Fam. Cem. - family cemetery
Cem. - cemetery

and both data sources indicate that the earlier periods are under-represented. Based on the standing structures listed in Appendix II and the potential historic archaeological sites listed in Appendix III, a grand total of 398 historic sites are located within the project corridor; this number should be somewhat lower, due to the cross-listing of several sites in both Appendices. By combining these data bases, it can be seen that the first three periods are under-represented within the project corridor: there are no known sites from the 1630 to 1730 period, four from the 1730 to 1770 period, and two from the 1770 to 1830 period. By contrast, there are at least 245 historic sites dating from the 1830 to 1880 period, and 154 dating to the 1880 to 1940+ period. These results suggest that the last two periods can be studied best from existing standing structures supplemented by archaeological investigations, while the first three periods can best be examined by archaeological inquiry, due to the paucity of sites, standing structures, and functional types dating from prior to the mid-nineteenth century in the project corridor.

PREDICTIVE MODELS

The previous section of this report presented the inventories of known, and previously recorded, prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. As was noted earlier, the sites recorded in the state records do not represent all the cultural resources in the study area, or even an unbiased sample. Consequently, it is necessary to use projections of potential